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institute for  
conservation

**Preserving Cultural  
Heritage**

## **Ask a Conservator Day Toolkit**

Created exclusively for AIC members, this toolkit contains resources that make it easier to celebrate Ask a Conservator Day.

### **What is the benefit of participating in Ask a Conservator Day?**

- Builds awareness and appreciation of the field
- Helps people understand what conservation is and why it matters to them
- Enables you to communicate the importance of your work
- Supports business development for private practitioners
- Supports fundraising and grant applications for your organization
- Reaches voters, policy makers, elected officials, and opinion leaders
- Provides information for those interested in entering the field
- Offers an additional platform to engage with your colleagues and other conservators around the world

### **Here's what's inside:**

- **Menu of Ideas** – Ways to celebrate Ask a Conservator Day, online or in person, that require a time commitment ranging from mere seconds to a few hours
- **FAQ** – Answers to frequently asked questions about Ask a Conservator Day
- **Messages** – Succinct and evocative phrases that you can use to explain the importance of conservation to people outside the field
- **Template Press Release** – A tool that you can customize and share with local media contacts or post on your website to inform more people about your participation in Ask a Conservator Day
- **Social Media Graphics and Sample Posts** – Resources for Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and X (formerly known as Twitter)
- **Webinar Invitation** – An opportunity to ask questions and share ideas with your fellow AIC members on **Oct. 11, 3 pm ET**

**Questions?** Contact Katelin Lee, Outreach Manager, [klee@culturalheritage.org](mailto:klee@culturalheritage.org)



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## How to Celebrate Ask a Conservator Day

The ways to participate in Ask a Conservator Day are as numerous as our members. This document offers a wide (though not necessarily exhaustive) range of forms of involvement, so that you/your team can choose an option that is most reflective of your capacity, platform(s), and audience. If you don't have the capacity for the activities that require a greater time investment, consider them for next year.

### **Digital**

If you're part of an organization that would be open to posting about Ask A Conservator Day on its social media channels, explore that idea with your colleagues (including by sharing the social media assets included in this toolkit). If that is not possible, either because your organization does not want to post or because you are a solo practitioner, you can use your own social media to participate. If you don't use social media, there are other virtual options below.

- **If you can dedicate a few minutes to Ask a Conservator Day...**
  - Introduce yourself in a blog post or reshare colleagues' posts on [the AIC member community](#).
  - If you have a LinkedIn page, [follow AIC and FAIC](#).
  - Email 1-4 pictures of you at work with a ~100-word blurb to [Katelin Lee](#) to be spotlighted on AIC and FAIC's social-media channels. Blurb ideas:
    - **Describe a recent project or career milestone**
    - **Explain why you chose to become a conservator**
    - **Describe your favorite part of your career**
  - Write a quick post on your social media to introduce yourself as a professional and let people know about #AskAConservator Day.
  - Like, reshare, or comment on posts on the @Conservators feeds or that are tagged #AskAConservator. Amplify other conservators' posts because highlighting your colleagues is an important way to participate.
  - Share the "Careers in Cultural Heritage" page on the AIC Wiki to help more people learn about career pathways and ways to get involved with cultural heritage, linked [here](#).
  - Livestream from your lab for fifteen minutes (via Instagram Live, TikTok Live, or a similar platform)
  - If you have a website and space on your site, consider adding a banner image about Ask A Conservator Day on your homepage to solicit questions you can answer online
  - If you are emailing conservator colleagues on Nov. 3, consider adding a note about Ask a Conservator Day and let them know they can still participate.

- **If you can dedicate up to an hour to Ask a Conservator Day...**
  - If you have an e-newsletter, solicit questions from your subscribers and answer them in your next edition.
  - On social media, write a more in-depth post to share the story of why you became a conservator or an unusual challenge that you've encountered in your career (like food in collections or arsenic in wallpaper).
  - Answer questions on your social media platforms. A few ideas to get you started:
    - **Why is conservation important to you?**
    - **What is the most important change happening in the conservation field now?**
    - **How did you become a conservator?**
    - **What's your favorite part of your job?**
    - **Why is it important to save cultural heritage?**
- **If you can dedicate several hours to Ask a Conservator Day...**
  - Host a Reddit-style AMA on a social media platform (including Reddit, potentially) and answer questions for an extended period of time.
  - Organize a Zoom panel with your colleagues.
  - Partner with a local library, historic society, artist foundation, or business association to "takeover" its social-media account.
- **If you can't dedicate any time to Ask a Conservator Day on November 3...**
  - Consider whether you can conduct Ask a Conservator Day activities any day in the week from Oct. 30-Nov. 3. Hold an activity in the week leading up to Ask a Conservator Day, promote conservator colleagues' events, or amplify Ask a Conservator Day content within your network.

### In-Person

Ask a Conservator Day is not exclusively a digital/social media event. You can do an in-person event or do both digital or in-person activities, if you have the capacity. Here are some suggested in-person options for participating listed below:

- **Host an open house at your lab/workspace**  
Invite art history students from a local college, the staff and docents of a local museum or historical society, and/or your clients past and present.
- **Host a one-on-one or small tour**  
If you can't accommodate a large group or want to limit the number of potential invitees, consider a smaller group of 4-10 people or even one person. Inviting a local elected official, journalist, or social media influencer to your lab can spread the word about the importance of conservation.
- **Empower the next generation**  
The most popular question on Ask a Conservator Day to date has been "how do I enter the field?" Make an impact on young lives by offering to present about your career at a local high school art or science class, university, or other educational organization.
- **Team up**
  - Set up a booth at a local library, historic society, artist foundation, or business association.
  - Reach out to fellow AIC members in your area to organize an event about why conservation is important in your community.



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## Ask a Conservator Day FAQ

### What is Ask a Conservator Day?

- Ask a Conservator Day is an annual event organized by the American Institute for Conservation that allows conservators to share their work with the public and educate people about the importance of cultural heritage in our lives.

### When is Ask a Conservator Day?

- Friday, November 3, 2023

### What if I'm busy on November 3?

- If you have a conflict on November 3, you can participate in Ask a Conservator Day any time between Monday, October 30 through Friday, November 3.

### Who can participate in Ask a Conservator Day?

- All conservators and allied professionals can participate (but only AIC members receive this toolkit).

### Can private practitioners participate?

- Yes. The resources in this toolkit are designed to help all AIC members, whether you work at an institution or run your own firm.

### What if I don't have social media or a website?

- There are many ways to participate, even if you don't use social media or have a website. The menu of ideas in this toolkit provides ideas and suggestions.

### Do I have to fill out and send the template press release?

- Like all the materials in the toolkit, the template press release is a resource provided to AIC members. If you / your organization do not have the capacity to distribute the press release to local media, you may consider using the template for a blog post or e-newsletter—but there are many ways to participate that do not require using the template press release.

### What if somebody asks me a question that I don't feel comfortable answering or don't have time to explain in detail?

- In some cases, you might answer, "I can't share that information, but AIC can help," and share resources like:
  - o ["Caring for Your Treasures"](#)
  - o The [Find a Conservator tool](#)
  - o An overview of [how to become a conservator](#)
  - o [The conservation Wiki](#)

- o If someone asks you about the value of an object, AIC recommends referring them to [the Appraisers Association of America](#) and [the American Society of Appraisers](#)
- You can also say, “Let me think about that and get back to you.”



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## Messages

**Cultural heritage is the irreplaceable record of what makes us human. It is the memory of our past, the account of our lives today, and the expression of human creativity across time.**

- Tangible cultural heritage includes monuments, sites, and artifacts.
- Intangible cultural heritage includes traditions, skills, and customs passed from one generation to another.

**Preserving cultural heritage is vital for everyone. Safeguarding these objects and this knowledge helps foster a society where all people are valued and can thrive.**

- Everyone has a connection to cultural heritage through objects, collections, buildings, and sites in their lives.
- Cultural heritage deepens the connections that people feel with their histories and cultures, and helps define personal and collective identities.

**Conservators preserve cultural heritage for future generations. People are at the center of this work.**

- Conservators are dedicated to preserving and helping to share the remarkable diversity of human cultural achievement.
- Conservators go through years of rigorous training spanning arts, science, engineering, and the humanities to enter the field.
- The conservation field is creative and interdisciplinary, and grounded in social justice, equity, and environmental action.
- Conservators collaborate with diverse communities to safeguard sites, artifacts, and traditions. These communities' knowledge is vital to inclusive stewardship; cultural understanding; and new research.
- Conservators also preserve family heirlooms, cherished works of art in people's homes, and objects damaged by the passage of time, accidents, and emergencies.
- Conservators' work is important not just to the field, but to our collective humanity. Conservators not only preserve objects, but the stories that tie us together as people.

- Conservators help us to understand how objects were made and to learn about the people and cultures who made them, research that illuminates the legacies of creators and the course of human history.

**The climate crisis poses an existential threat to cultural heritage worldwide. But positive change is possible. The conservation field is leading the way by charting the path to a better and more resilient future.**

- Environmental and climate disasters imperil museums, libraries, archives, historic structures, monuments, sites, and historic landscapes.
- Conservators help cultural-heritage organizations plan for the future, increase resilience, and recover from disaster.
- The impacts of the climate crisis fall disproportionately on marginalized communities. Conservators' collaborations with these communities are integral to social justice in the face of growing threats to tangible and intangible cultural heritage.



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If you have a  
logo, add  
here

**YOUR ORGANIZATION/CONSERVATION FIRM to Celebrate  
Ask a Conservator Day on November 3/or other date Oct. 30 through Nov. 2 if  
you cannot participate on Nov. 3**

*Public Can Ask the People Who Preserve Our Cultural Heritage Questions about Caring for Their Own  
Heirlooms and Join TK PROGRAM at YOUR ORGANIZATION/CONSERVATION FIRM  
Ask A Conservator Day is Presented by the American Institute for Conservation  
In Partnership with Its 3500+ Members*

City, State/Province, Date — YOUR ORGANIZATION/CONSERVATION FIRM announced today that it will join dozens of museums, libraries, archives, historic sites, private conservation labs, and other cultural-heritage organizations across the country in celebrating the American Institute for Conservation's (AIC) Ask a Conservator Day on November 3/or other date Oct. 30 through Nov. 2 if you cannot participate on Nov. 3. Since 2019, AIC has led the annual celebration, which enables the public to ask questions about preserving their own family heirlooms, belongings, and mementoes and participate in programs across the country. Conservators are dedicated to preserving our cultural heritage—from monuments, historic sites, artifacts and works of art to the traditions, skills, and customs passed from one generation to another.

YOUR ORGANIZATION/CONSERVATION FIRM will celebrate Ask a Conservator Day with a/an event / offering. Describe this event or offering. If you will be answering questions on social media, explain how users can submit their questions and list relevant social-media handles.

Quote from a leader at your organization (e.g., director, head conservator, or, if you are in private practice, from yourself)

Last year's Ask a Conservator Day prompted an outpouring of responses from across North America with questions about what conservators do, how to preserve objects, and how to get involved in the field. Describe how you have celebrated Ask a Conservator Day in the past or announce that this is the first time you are participating. NAME OF PARTICIPATING PERSONNEL, TITLE at ORGANIZATION/FIRM or ORGANIZATION/FIRM (if you are an organizational member) has been a member of AIC since YEAR.

"Ask a Conservator Day is an incredible opportunity for the public to connect with conservators—both private practitioners as well as those at institutions—about their remarkable stories of preserving objects, from the Watts Towers—a massive folk art installation that is a National Landmark—to a community's archives of its history, to ancient pottery made by the Indigenous peoples of the Southwest," states **Lissa Rosenthal-Yoffe**, Executive Director of the American Institute for Conservation and its sister organization, the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation. "Ask a Conservator Day is a platform for fostering curiosity, illuminating the connections that everyone has to conservation, and



helping people take care of their most meaningful possessions. Preserving cultural heritage, whether in the form of objects or traditions, helps foster a society where everyone is valued and can thrive.”

### **About your conservation firm or institution**

#### **About The American Institute for Conservation (AIC)**

AIC is the leading membership association for current and aspiring conservators and allied professionals who preserve cultural heritage. AIC represents more than 3,500 individuals in more than 40 countries around the world working in the domains of science, art, and history through treatment, research, collections care, education, and more. All of them have the same goal: to preserve our cultural heritage so we can learn from it today and appreciate it in the future.

Learn more at [culturalheritage.org](http://culturalheritage.org), follow @conservators on Instagram and X, and join the conversation by tagging your posts #AskAConservator.

#### **Contacts:**

**Your contact info**



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## **Ask a Conservator Day Sample Social Media Posts:**

Individuals:

Conservators! Be part of #AskAConservator day—help raise awareness of what we do by participating. Let your followers know they can ask you questions. Find more information here: <http://bit.ly/2nU9531>

I'm participating in #AskAConservator day! Conservators around the world will be discussing their work on November 3rd. Ask me questions & follow the hashtag to see who is participating.

I'm participating in #AskAConservator day! What do you want to know about being a conservator? Start asking questions now and I'll answer them on November 3rd!

Do you have questions about what conservators do? Ask me anything about my work on November 3rd, #AskAConservator day! Reply to this (post/tweet) and use the hashtag.

Institutional/organizational accounts:

We're participating in #AskAConservator day! Conservators around the world will be discussing their work on November 3rd. Ask us questions & follow the hashtag to see who else is participating.

Do you have questions about how we care for (collections type: i.e. art, building, site, specimens, etc.)? Ask us anything on November 3rd on #AskAConservator Day! You can reply to this tweet or @ us and use the #AskAConservator hashtag.

November 3rd is #AskAConservator day! (Title and name of conservator(s)) will be answering your questions at (time). Bring all of your questions about how we care for (collections type: i.e. art, building, site, specimens, etc.)

What do our conservator(s) do? They care for (notable collections items or types of items). Want to know how they do it? Ask your questions on November 3rd, #AskAConservator day!

## **Promotional Images:**

We encourage you to use images of from your work to make your posts more

unique and meaningful, but you can also find promotional images here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tbaiYJrrDutyX2S8P6zGywZ317UiBac2?usp=sharing>

## Ask a Conservator Day Brainstorming Session Invitation

Curious about participating in Ask a Conservator Day but not 100% sure *how* you want to participate? Save the date for **October 11 at 3 pm ET** and join FAIC Outreach Manager Katelin Lee and our team from Resnicow and Associates to talk all things Ask a Conservator Day, which takes place this year on November 3!

This will be an informal, "office hours"-style conversation that will touch on how you can best match your capacity to your participation, maximize engagement, work with media professionals, and hone your ideas. Next week we'll also be releasing a toolkit for AIC members for Ask a Conservator Day, including a "menu" of possible activities for you to take a look at as you consider how you might participate this year. This webinar will also be an opportunity to discuss the resources in the toolkit and ask questions about Ask a Conservator Day.

Sign up to join the conversation on the 11<sup>th</sup> here:

<https://learning.culturalheritage.org/p/AACD-Discussion-Session>